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GENERAL DEBATE

Letter dated 4 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to refer to the matter of the unfair treatment by the secretariat of the General Assembly of the United Nations of Iraq's requests concerning the fixing of a date for its address to the General Assembly.

It is well known that the secretariat of the General Assembly requests each State Member of the United Nations to submit three choices of a date for its address during the period of the general debate of the General Assembly and that those choices are divided among the three weeks of the general debate. The secretariat of the General Assembly approves one of the three choices in the light of various criteria, inter alia, the principle of rotation so as to guarantee the equal rights of States.

It is extremely regrettable that, since 1990, the General Assembly has ignored our requests to speak during the first week of the general debate, which is supposed to accommodate one third of the Member States. The dates for our addresses were fixed for the second or third weeks, sometimes unsuitably so on dates which we had never requested.

In view of this repeated discriminatory practice, which, occurring for the sixth successive year, means that the secretariat of the General Assembly now typically deals with Iraq's requests in such a manner, we should like to draw attention to the unfairness of this treatment, particularly since, in performing their work, Secretariat bodies are required to apply impartially the principle of the equal rights and prerogatives of States as guaranteed under the Charter.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 9.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Permanent Representative
Ambassador

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